

BRANCHING OUT

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Spring 2008

Volume 2, Issue 1

Join Us For Our 5th Annual Take Back the Night

By Terri DeWalt



Hello fellow community members!

As some of you may know, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). In honor of SAAM, Sexual Assault Services will be holding our 5th Annual Take Back the Night. The event will be on Thursday April 3rd from 6:00 -8:00 p.m. at the DeKoven Center's Great Hall (600 21st Street Racine, WI 53403).

Although this is the 5th year SAS is holding a Take Back the Night, there may be some of you who have never joined us; and to those people, I want to extend a special invitation to attend this year.

A Take Back the Night provides the opportunity for sexual assault survivors, other community members and professionals to discuss the impact sexual violence has on our community and to help unite us in our efforts to end sexual violence in Racine County.

For those who may have never attended one, a Take Back the Night (TBTN) is an internationally recognized event that honors and supports survivors of sexual violence. The term "Take Back the Night" came from the title of a 1977 memorial read by activist and publisher Anne Pride at an anti-violence rally in Pittsburgh. And although the first known Take Back the Night in the world was held in Belgium, the first TBTN in the United States was organized in San Francisco, California on November 4, 1978.

The word "*night*" was originally meant to symbolize the fear many people feel while walking alone at the night, and "Take Back the Night" began as a way to speak out against the violence that occurs in our communities. TBTN has grown from an event that only took place in major cities to one that now happens in communities of all sizes, large and small, as well as on many college campuses.

Everyone is invited to attend this free and family-friendly event. Activities will include food and refreshments, art displays, the Clothesline Project, a candle-lit vigil, a speak-out against sexual violence and craft projects. We are also lucky enough to have three wonderful speakers: Mike Williams, the Director of the Living Free Program at the Kenosha County Detention Center will be joining us for the evening. In addition we are honored to have a Survivor and Activist share her story of courage with us. Last, but not least, Dave Walsh, the past Chief of Police for the City of Burlington, and current Police Chief of the Appleton Police Department, will be making the trip back to Racine County to share his thoughts on ending sexual violence in our community.

If you want to make a contribution to help support our TBTN, volunteer at the event, or just want to learn more about TBTN, please feel free to call us at 262-619-1634 or email me at tdewalt@lsswis.org. I look forward to seeing you there!

— Terri

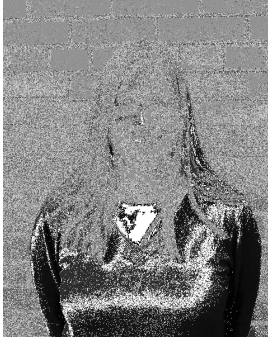
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Face To Face

By Lora Schultz Reinders

I remember a day while I was in college (not *too* long ago), groaning when looking at the book that was the reading assignment for that week. It was a book written in the 70's called "Blaming the Victim" written by William Ryan. I remember thinking while looking at the yellowed book: "What could something written in the 70's possibly have to say to me now? Shouldn't we be reading new research, things relevant to today?" The book's main focus was on poverty and racial relations, and to be honest, I don't remember much of its content, but since beginning my work with sexual abuse and assault victims, the title of the book has resounded in my mind on more than a few occasions. It is apparent to me that we still have a long way to go to decrease our victim blaming.

To start out, let's take a look at this word: victim. It does not have a very positive connotation. We do not like people who "play the victim." Sometimes when people complain too much we may want to tell them to "stop being a victim." In reality a victim is someone who had something done *TO* them, something they did not ask for. Do we always look at victims as innocent?

In my personal work with victims, usually through psychotherapy sessions, many victims report feeling uneasy by the things family members and others say to them. They may not use the word – that they felt *blamed*, but it seems they often indicate receiving subtle (or not so subtle) messages that they are not *blameless*.

I sometimes wonder if victims of other crimes feel this way, or if it is something unique to this very personal crime of sexual assault. Sexual abuse and assault is often a crime of coercion and manipulation, and is only sometimes violent. This can lead to confusion for the victim as well as for those trying to help the victim. Victims are often saying to themselves "how could I have been so stupid," "how did I get myself into this," or "if only I had/n't..." This is a normal process for victims, but the truth is, no matter what kind of risky behavior someone may have been engaging in, what kind of lies they may have fallen for, or what kind of naïve trust they put in someone, only one person is responsible for committing a sexual crime and that is the perpetrator. When a child is the victim, their behavior and choices do not need to be questioned to find out who is to blame, because they cannot make sexual consent choices. When an adult victim is involved, if consent was not given, a crime has been committed. We may wonder: "why didn't you..." but this does not change the responsibility of the person who chose to violate someone else's rights. The response of those receiving the first disclosures is very important in the resulting level of trauma the victim experiences. In fact, it is important to understand the person's disclosure experience, including the reactions of the individuals the victim first told about the abuse or assault, and in my opinion it is just as important to understand their

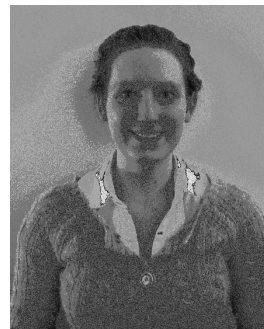
disclosure experience as it is to understand what they went through when being abused or assaulted.

It matters what we say to victims! Every victim, every time deserves to receive the message from those around them that they are not to blame for being the victim of a sexual crime.

— Lora

SAS Wish List

- Volunteer Advocates!
- Gift cards/certificates from Target, Office Depot or other discount stores
- Courage to Heal book series
- New clothes for victims at the hospital (t-shirts, sweat pants, underwear, etc.)
- Gift bags filled with body lotions & shower gels to be given to victims at the hospital
- General art and craft supplies



Meet Lynn!

Hi, my name is Lynn Cook and I am the new Prevention Educator! I am currently a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee studying social work. I have a background in working with children and adolescents and I spent the last three years with the Boys and Girls Club of Oshkosh. While in Oshkosh I obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, but I am originally from Madison. Thanks for the warm welcome so far and I am really looking forward to learning and growing with this organization!

Call For Submissions...



If you are a survivor or you know a survivor who would like to submit a poem, short story, artwork or editorial for publication in this newsletter, please email it to

Samantha Sustachek (ssustachek@lsswis.org).





Legislative Update Corner

By Vicki Biehn

I am pleased to announce that as of this writing it looks like two more important bills for sexual assault survivors will be passed by the end of this legislative session on March 13. The only issue right now is that the legislative session is running short on time to get both bills passed in the full senate and assembly.

The first bill is SB 292 (senate bill) and AB 544 (assembly bill). Basically this bill will make human trafficking a crime in the state of Wisconsin. It is estimated that there are 800,000 to 900,000 human trafficking victims a year worldwide and about 18,000 to 20,000 of those are victims trafficked into the United States each year. Human trafficking is the third largest and growing criminal industry in the world. The federal government has anti-human trafficking laws, but only 24 states have added this type of legislation so far. It is important to add anti-human trafficking laws to the Wisconsin state statutes because the U.S. Attorney's office does not have the resources to prosecute every trafficker under the federal statutes, and as a result many human trafficking cases are not prosecuted.

The second bill is SB269 and AB 520, which is a bill that changes the housing laws in Wisconsin in order to be more supportive of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking victims. This bill allows these victims to break their leases without any extreme financial hardship, and to ensure that leases which restrict access to certain services are void and unenforceable. So what does that mean? Basically this bill allows victims to break a lease if they are in imminent threat of physical harm and that a landlord cannot restrict them from calling the police or medical emergency personnel when needed. Many victims of these types of crime are victimized in their own home or building which makes it difficult for them to be safe and to feel safe. This bill has already passed the senate but was amended in the assembly and therefore needs to go back to the senate for a full senate vote on the amended version and then signed by Governor Doyle.

The 2007/2008 Wisconsin legislative session has been a productive and important one for sexual assault survivors. The legislature passed the compassionate care for rape victims, secured money for SAFE funding, drafted anti-human trafficking laws, and made housing laws that are more supportive to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. It is wonderful to see such progress within the legislature for addressing sexual assault victims and their needs. The legislature session ends on March 13, so for upcoming legislative updates I will be explaining to our readers how to keep an eye on the Wisconsin legislature and what are the goals for next year's session.

— Vicki

Suggested Reading On Sexual Assault Issues

For Adult Sexual Assault Survivors:

I am the Central Park Jogger: A story of hope and possibility
by Trisha Meili

For Adults Molested as Children:

The Courage to Heal

by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis

The Courage to Heal Workbook

by Laura Davis

Voices of Courage: Inspiration from Survivors

by Mike Domitrz

For Adolescents and Young Adults:

Strong at the Heart: how it feels to heal from sexual abuse
by Carolyn Lehman

For Caregivers of Sexually Abused Children:

What Only a Mother Can Tell you about Child Sexual Abuse
by Karen Schaefer

For Males Who Are Supporting a Female Survivor:

If She is Raped

by Alan W. McEvoy

For General Risk Reduction:

May I Kiss You: A candid look at dating, communication, respect and sexual assault awareness

by Mike Domitrz

The Gift of Fear

by Gavin DeBecker

Protecting the Gift

by Gavin DeBecker

For Parents Talking to Kids About Sex/Sexual Abuse:

A Very Touching Book

by Jan Hindman

My Body is Private

by Linda Walvoord Girard

Body Parts: Amazing You

by Dr. Gail Saltz

What's the Big Secret-Talking About Sex with Girls and Boys
by Laurie Krasny Brown

There is No Sex Fairy: The Ten Commandments of Raising Sexually Respectful Children

by Jan Hindman



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Helping Hands

By Samantha Sustachek

Volunteers are without a doubt the heart of the Sexual Assault Services (SAS) program. Without them, SAS would not have 24-hour crisis line coverage and hospital response. But what type of person makes a good volunteer? And how do you turn an individual interested in the program into a Volunteer Advocate? In this issue of *Branching Out*, "Helping Hands" will attempt to answer those questions.

Good SAS volunteers can be found almost anywhere. Current volunteers are at all stages of their lives – from college students to working professionals to retired seniors. Because the SAS volunteer program is so flexible, most people find that they can fit it into even the busiest of schedules. We at SAS believe that almost any person with a desire to do this type of volunteer work will have the ability to be a good volunteer. People who are compassionate, non-judgmental, good listeners make outstanding Volunteer Advocates.

Unfortunately, being a compassionate person does not mean that someone is ready to start answering calls on the crisis line. All SAS volunteers go through a 15-hour training, during which they strengthen the skills they already possess, as well as gain some additional knowledge about sexual assault issues and survivor dynamics. Trainings are broken down into smaller sessions and usually take place over the course of several evenings.

During a typical four evening training, the first evening is used to help new volunteers get to know each other and become comfortable participating in the group. The volunteers are familiarized with the SAS program, learn about the different types of sexual assault, and discuss sexual assault prevention. The second evening is spent going over confidentiality issues, the Crime Victim Compensation program, and diversity. During the third session, volunteers tour the hospital and see the forensic exam room, learn about suicide and self-injury, and get an overview of resources available to the Racine community. On the last night, new volunteers learn about technical issues like operating the crisis line phone and signing up for on call shifts. On this evening, they also participate in a powerful activity called "Walking the Walk." During the activity, they play the role of a sexual assault survivor and discover how it feels to navigate through community systems and interact with peers following an assault. As volunteers proceed through all of these lessons, they also learn good communication skills, the importance of their roles, and how to take care of themselves as they begin to work with survivors.

As of the publication date of this newsletter, SAS has just completed a four-week training for new Volunteer Advocates. Nine compassionate, supportive individuals have fine-tuned their skills, learned some new ones, and are now ready to start answering the crisis line and

responding to the hospital. We are pleased to count them among our group of exceptional, committed Volunteer Advocates.

SAS conducts three to four volunteer trainings every year, so for those who just missed out this time around, another training is right around the corner. If you have questions about the volunteer program or know someone who might make a good volunteer, please contact Samantha Sustachek (ssustachek@lsswis.org). Volunteer Advocacy is not always easy, but SAS is thrilled that so many members of the Racine community are willing to give it a try!

— Sam

Suggested Reading...cont'd. from pg. 3

About Sexual Offenders:

Predators, Pedophiles, Rapists, and other Sex Offenders: Who they are, how they operate, and how we can protect ourselves and our children

by Anna Salter

Identifying Child Molesters: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse by Recognizing the Patterns of Offenders

by Carla Van Dam

Novels:

Speak

by Laurie Halse Anderson

(a teenager is sexually assaulted the summer before 9th grade)

Lucky

by Alice Sebold


(a true story about a woman who was raped at her college)

Novels that inform the reader about sex offenders and their patterns:

Shiny Waters, Fault Lines, White Lies, Prison Blues, and Truth Catcher

by Anna Salter

SAS First Quarter Statistics January—March 2008*



Crisis Line Calls.....	48
Racine Hospital Visits.....	6
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	0
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	5
New Counseling Clients.....	19
Counseling Sessions.....	149
Community Presentations.....	19

* As of publication date

Western Racine County Corner

By Vicki Biehn

When you think of a "typical" rape or sexual assault scenario what is the first thought that comes to your mind? Many people think of the stereotypical scenario of a woman on the streets of a city who is beaten and raped by a stranger. Although rare, this type of sexual violence does happen. However this is only one type of sexual violence that happens in our country. The stereotyped belief that rape happens most often by strangers in the city impacts our society's belief about where sexual violence occurs. Most people tend to believe that sexual violence occurs at much higher rates in urban areas as compared to rural areas. I believe that it is important to address this stereotype about rape because if we believe that sexual violence doesn't happen as often in rural areas, one is less likely to believe rural survivors and they may be less likely to receive the necessary services they deserve.

I would like to share some information from Dr. Susan H. Lewis of The National Sexual Violence Resource Center. In 2003, Dr. Lewis wrote a pamphlet titled Unspoken Crimes: Sexual Assault in Rural America that shared information from a variety of studies that researched and compared sexual violence in rural and urban areas. This pamphlet covered many aspects of sexual violence including barriers to reporting sexual crimes, challenges for sexual assault services providers in rural areas, and the prevalence of sexual violence in rural areas. I would like to share with you what the studies discovered about the prevalence of sexual violence in rural versus urban areas.

This pamphlet reported that crime in general is more prevalent in urban areas versus rural areas for a variety of reasons, including higher population density, more ethnic diversity, higher residential mobility, and poverty. She also reports that some of the conditions associated with crime are actually higher in rural areas, such as poverty and unemployment. She reviews four different studies that address rural sexual violence in the states of Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Alaska and Mississippi. Although one cannot generalize to the whole United States from these four states, the studies showed that sexual violence could be as high or higher in rural regions as it is in urban areas.

In the research from Pennsylvania they found that, although the absolute numbers for sexual violence is greater in the urban areas, the rates of sexual violence for adult victims and child victims was actually higher in the rural areas. A review of the data found that the eight highest rates of forcible adult rapes per capita from July 2001 to June 2002 were from rural counties. Furthermore, these rates exceeded those of all urban counties and included the three most rural counties in the state. A study that used data collected from the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families found that rural counties had higher rates of sexual assault than the urban counties.

In the state of Oklahoma there are 77 rural counties and only 3 counties that are considered urban. The researchers found that there were more than a dozen rural counties that had a sexual assault rate higher than the state average. They also found that it was difficult to see if

the rural counties had higher or lower rates of sexual assault because even small fluctuations in reporting sexual violence greatly impacted whether a county was on the low or high end of sexual assault rates.

The Mississippi study also found that many of the 71 rural counties reported higher rates of sexual assault and in fact, the most rural county had the second highest rate of sexual assault in the state. The researchers felt that some of this was related to the fact that there was good reporting in that county due to some programs that were implemented in that county by the sexual assault service provider.

Alaska is the largest state in the nation and about 90% of Alaska cannot be reached by a road system. Over the past two decades the FBI has ranked Alaska with the highest rate of rape 2/3's of the time. This is an alarming statistic because this rate only reflects the Uniform Crime Report, which narrowly defines rape, and is not inclusive of all forms of sexual violence and victims. In 1999 the Rate of Rape per 100,000 residents in the nation was 32.7 and in Alaska it was 83.5. If one just calculates it per 100,000 female residents, Alaska had a rape rate of 173 in 1999. The researchers also found that the most rural areas had the highest rate of sexual assault in the state of Alaska.

These studies demonstrate that not only does sexual violence occur in both urban and rural areas of our nation; it appears that rural areas can have just as high or even higher rates of sexual assault as urban areas. This knowledge is important for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is important to acknowledge that sexual violence does happen in all of Racine County, and knowing this reminds us that it is important to support and provide the necessary services to survivors of sexual violence and their family members regardless of what part of the county they reside in.

You're Invited! 5th Annual Take Back the Night

Racine's 5th Annual Take Back the Night will be held on this year's National Day to End Sexual Violence: Thursday, April 3rd 2008. The event will be held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in DeKoven Center's Great Hall.

The event will include speakers (featuring Mike Williams, the Director of the Living Free Program at the Kenosha County Detention Center; Dave Walsh, the former Police Chief of Burlington and current Police Chief in Appleton; and a survivor of sexual violence), an open mic speak-out, a candle-lit vigil and march, The Clothesline Project, food, drinks and other activities.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend this free community event. So mark your calendars now and show your support as we work to end sexual violence in our community!





Sexual Assault Services
1220 Mound Ave., Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404

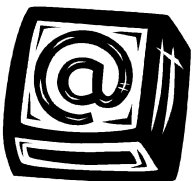
Contact Us!

SAS Racine Office
1220 Mound Ave. Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404
262-619-1634

SAS Burlington Office
480 S. Pine St.
Burlington, WI 53105
262-763-6226 Ext. 31

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

